

**Congressman**

**ROBERT MENENDEZ**

**13th Congressional District ~ New Jersey**



**Report to the People**

**Congress of the United States**  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.



Dear Friend,

As a life-long resident of this Congressional District, I know that we are a strong community of hard-working people who possess the values of faith, sacrifice, family, and love of country. I am proud to be a part of this community and to have the opportunity to work with you to face the challenges affecting us today. I know that working together, there is no challenge we cannot overcome.

I continue to hear ongoing concerns about the availability and security of good-paying jobs, the affordability of higher education, health care and prescription drugs, and the well-being of our nation's veterans and soldiers. My staff and I are working hard to represent your views in Washington on these and many other important issues to help you meet the daily challenges that you and your family face. To do this effectively, we need to hear from you. You may contact me at one of my offices or through my website at [www.menendez.house.gov](http://www.menendez.house.gov).

As always, I am honored to represent you in Congress and remain committed to championing the priorities you care about. I look forward to continuing to serve you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Robert Menendez in red ink, written in a cursive style.

Robert Menendez

# Working to Keep and Create Jobs at Home

I am working to strengthen the economy by creating good-paying jobs here at home. We should be exporting New Jersey products, not New Jersey jobs. Two ways I am working to do this are through my Liberty Corridor initiative and by creating a high-tech agenda for America.

## **Creating the Liberty Corridor**

The Liberty Corridor's purpose is to provide the opportunity for a person or company with an idea for a product to do the research and development, design, manufacturing, and product export all from within northern New Jersey.

My vision is that the Liberty Corridor will provide an advanced and innovative network that will utilize the research capabilities of the region's universities, redevelop industrial sites, restore wetlands, reclaim brownfields, expand manufacturing, and improve rail, freight, and port infrastructure. By combining all these important pieces into one cohesive effort, the Corridor will provide a unique set of tools and resources that no other region in the nation will be able to offer.

The 13th Congressional District proudly serves our region and the nation as a global gateway whose foundations are a world-class airport and seaport. It continues to be a starting point for new industry, innovative

ideas, and critical transportation of goods. These resources, along with New Jersey's leading research and technology capabilities, will be key to our region's continued economic growth and the creation of jobs.

The Liberty Corridor will help ensure our nation's role as a global economic leader while stimulating new technology, creating jobs, and fostering economic growth for New Jersey. I will continue to work to make this vision a reality in the national transportation bill pending before Congress.

## **Empowering America's High-Tech Companies**

In order to remain competitive in the global economy, the United States needs to have a plan for encouraging economic and job growth in the technology sector. Therefore, I led the Democratic Leadership in drafting a high-tech agenda that includes:

- ▲ extending the Research and Development tax credit to encourage innovation;
- ▲ expanding access to broadband technology;
- ▲ providing tax incentives to keep jobs in the U.S.;
- ▲ providing adequate funding for worker training, math and science education, and basic research; and
- ▲ expanding Trade Adjustment Assistance



*Congressman Menendez breaks ground on the redevelopment of the Peninsula at Bayonne Harbor (formerly MOTBY) using federal funds he secured.*

benefits to protect our service workers who have been laid off.

We need to protect high-skill, high-wage, high-tech jobs in the U.S., and I will work to create the incentives needed to do that. However, it is not enough to protect existing jobs; we need to create an environment that will produce new high-wage employment opportunities for hard-working Americans. I believe creating a business climate that protects intellectual property, facilitates research and product development, and protects jobs will allow our domestic companies to compete globally while also strengthening our economy.

## VETERANS

# Honoring Our Veterans

When veterans joined the service to defend our country, they knew they were putting their lives on the line. In return, our veterans thought they could count on the promises their government made about affordable health care, a quality education, and other benefits. However, some in Congress and the Administration want to cut those benefits. This is wrong, and I will continue to work in Congress to make sure the government keeps its promise to all our veterans. Therefore, I would like to update you on recent actions in Congress regarding important veterans' issues.

## **Survivor Benefits**

Military retirees pay premiums for years and rightfully expect that upon their death, their spouse will receive 55 percent of their benefit. But when their survivor reaches 62, a Social Security "offset" drops the benefit



*Congressman Menendez honors WWII Merchant Marine Veteran, Frank Perucci.*

to a mere 35 percent. To correct this injustice, I recently voted for the Department of

Defense Authorization bill, which provides long overdue retirement benefits to military spouses. Under Democratic pressure, provisions were included to reduce the penalty in the fall of 2005, and completely end it within five years.

## **Funding Veterans' Programs**

Just to keep pace with rising costs, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has estimated it needs an average annual increase in funding of at least 12 percent. I agree with the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the bipartisan leadership of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee that the President's budget request for veterans is inadequate. Instead, we should increase funding for veterans' programs by \$30 billion over the next 10 years.

*continued on page 3*



## Providing Affordable, Accessible Health Care

**H**ealth insurance premiums are rising faster than incomes, and middle-class families are feeling squeezed by the cost of care. High health care costs are even pricing many families out of the insurance market: one out of every four middle-class Americans was uninsured over the past two years. With health care costs rising and real wages stagnating or declining, hard-working people are being forced to choose between paying for health insurance and providing food for their family. Now more than ever, we need to take steps to make health care more affordable and predictable to protect our citizens' health and incomes. That is why I support helping our small businesses provide affordable health insurance to their employees, expanding health care coverage for our children, and allowing individuals 55 and older to buy into Medicare.

### **Lowering Costs for Small Businesses**

Small businesses account for 99 percent of all employers in this country and employ over half of the private workforce. That is why we need to provide a tax credit to help small businesses offer health coverage to their employees and their families. In addition, we should create state and national multi-insurer pools to provide comprehensive and affordable health insurance choices to small employers and the self-employed, regardless of whether they receive the tax credit.

### **Expanding Affordable Coverage for Working Parents and Families**

It is the children of hard-working families that too often go without health care insurance. Nearly 37 percent of all children under 18 went without health insurance last year. By expanding the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to cover additional low-income children and their parents, we can help address this problem.



*Congressman Menendez discusses the new Medicare prescription drug law with seniors.*

### **Providing Health Resources for Retirees**

People ages 55 to 64 are losing health insurance faster than any other group. I support legislation that covers the 3.5 million people who are over the age of 55 but not yet eligible for Medicare by allowing them to purchase Medicare coverage. These retirees would pay a fair premium and receive all the benefits Medicare beneficiaries enjoy.

### **Preserving Access to Affordable Prescription Drugs**

Prescription drug costs continue to skyrocket, putting a financial hardship on New Jerseyans. I strongly support efforts to bring down the rising cost of prescription drugs, and opposed the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act that was signed into law for the simple reason that seniors will end up paying more, while getting less.

To make sure New Jersey's seniors will not be hurt by this new law, I recently introduced the Preserving Access to Affordable Drugs (PAAD) Act. The PAAD Act would ensure seniors receive coverage that is at least as good as the coverage they already have. That includes protecting

retiree coverage, Medicaid, and Medigap coverage, as well as New Jersey Senior Gold coverage.

Without these fixes, approximately 94,000 New Jersey seniors and 1.7 million retirees nationwide will likely lose their employer-based drug coverage. In addition, New Jersey seniors could lose their coverage under New Jersey programs Senior Gold and Pharmaceutical Assistance for the

Aged and Disabled. Since the Republican Medicare plan does not go into effect until 2006, I will continue working to ensure that our seniors get a strong prescription drug benefit that is affordable, comprehensive, and guaranteed.

### **Medicare Drug Discount Card**

As part of the new Medicare law, seniors and people with disabilities have been allowed to purchase a new drug discount card. Some seniors will be able to save money using this card to purchase their prescriptions. However, there is no guarantee that this is a good deal for all seniors.

If you have questions regarding the new prescription drug discount card, please contact the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services at:

**Website:** [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)

**Medicare help line:** 1-800-MEDICARE  
1-800-633-4227

My office is also available to constituents who are having difficulty getting their Medicare questions answered.

### **Child Immunization Day**

My office sponsors a free immunization day to immunize our children entering school against life threatening, but preventable diseases. I strongly believe that we as parents, and the community as a whole, have a responsibility to protect the health and safety of our children.

## Honoring Our Veterans

*continued from page 2*

### **Veterans' Health Care**

The President's budget proposes new increases in veterans' out-of-pocket expenses for their health care. I oppose increases in veterans' health care costs and higher co-payments for prescription drugs. I will continue to work to get better funding for our veterans' medical care and to meet America's obligation to our veterans and their families.

### **Merchant Mariners**

Merchant mariners suffered the highest casualty rate of any service during World War II. In response to inquiries and letters from constituents, I have cosponsored H.R. 3729, the Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act. This legislation would provide a monthly benefit of \$1,000 to certain honorably discharged veterans who served between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946, in the U.S.

Merchant Marines and the Army and Navy Transport Services, or their survivors.

Finally, veterans may still need individual assistance – even with the help of the VA. For assistance with getting medals earned during service, checking the status of a VA claim, answering eligibility questions, or obtaining military documents, please contact any of my New Jersey offices listed in this newsletter for assistance.

# Opening Doors to Higher Education

**E**ducation is the key that unlocks the door to opportunity. As college costs continue to rise, many high school students and their families are faced with the challenge of how to pay for college, and unfortunately, many feel higher education is out of reach. No student should be denied the opportunity to go to college because they feel it is not within their means. I am continuing to fight in Congress to make higher education more affordable and to provide students and families the tools they need to get the best education possible. Higher education opens doors to better paying jobs and a higher quality of life, and every child deserves that chance.

## ***The Higher Education Affordability Resource Act***

As someone who understands the hardship of trying to pay for college and make ends meet, I have introduced a bill that will provide students and their families with additional resources for financing higher education. The Higher Education Affordability Resource (HEAR) Act would expand tuition tax credits, increase Pell Grants, create new loan forgiveness programs, and add more financial safeguards for students who face unusual hardships or come from low-income families. These tools could help make the difference for many families who are struggling with how to manage the growing costs of higher education.

## ***"Paying For College" Financial Aid Seminar***

A critical part of paying for college is knowing what financial options are available for students and their families. Too many families do not know about additional funding

sources that could help send their child to college. That is why I am working to ensure students and families have the resources to learn about funding and financial aid that can help them pay for college. As part of my commitment to providing better access to higher education for New Jersey students, I will be hosting a "Paying for College" financial aid seminar this fall. Please check back with one of my New Jersey offices later this summer to find out the details of the event.

## ***Financial Aid Resources***

If you are a family beginning the process of financing your child's higher education, or a student looking for additional tools to help you pay for college, below are a few financial aid resources that may be helpful to you. You may also visit my website at [www.menendez.house.gov](http://www.menendez.house.gov), which provides additional links and resources.

**Federal Student Aid:** [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov)  
or **1-800-4-FED-AID**

**Federal Resources for Students:**  
[www.students.gov](http://www.students.gov)

**Information on FAFSA form:**  
[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

## **Congressman Bob Menendez**

### ***District Offices***

911 Bergen Avenue  
Jersey City, N.J. 07306  
(201) 222-2828



263 Hobart Street  
Perth Amboy, N.J. 08861  
(732) 324-6212



654 Avenue C  
Bayonne, N.J. 07002  
(201) 823-2900



3109 Bergenline Avenue  
2nd Floor  
Union City, N.J. 07087  
(201) 558-0800

### ***Washington Office***

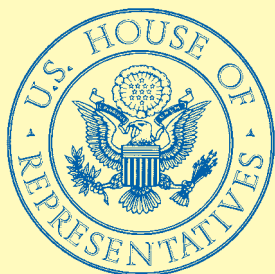
2238 Rayburn Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-7919

### ***website:***

[www.menendez.house.gov](http://www.menendez.house.gov)

Congress of the United States  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Official Business



*This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense.*

**M.C.**  
PRSRT STD